

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: WORLDWIDE CASE STUDIES AND CONTAMINANTS IN ALASKA

Invited Paper

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ABSTRACT

Environmental justice emerged as a concept in the early 1980s, and refers to “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” Although this field of inquiry is relatively young, cases of environmental injustice are as old as the exploitation of natural resources and the advent of the industrial revolution. This talk begins with an overview of classic examples and recent events of environmental injustice due to exposure to contaminants from around the world , and then focuses on those issues in Alaska. Both global and local sources of contaminants are examined, with an emphasis on health consequences for rural Alaskans. These case studies will then be put into the theoretical context of studies of environmental justice.

Keywords: environmental justice, contaminants, health, Alaska